Overview

Video is a powerful tool, used to inform, inspire, and engage audiences. Video can inform people about a cause, provide updated information to individuals all across the country, and move people to action. The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading is in the midst of creating an extensive online video library that furthers its mission and drives positive change in education.

To support this mission, the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading has created this GLR Technical Assistance Guide, which provides helpful information and tips on how to create powerful videos for the Campaign, and how to get the most out of the creation of these videos. Organizations, foundations, nonprofits, and Campaign members can use this guide to create and share their own videos of local, state, and national efforts to get all children reading on grade level by the end of the third grade.

This guide is broken into four important categories: Pre-production, Production, Editing, and Sharing Your Video. Each of these categories is further divided into specific subcategories that relate to each major heading. Browse the entire guide, or use the “Table of Contents” to search for information on a specific topic.
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Pre-Production is the first step in creating a video. This is the planning stage that occurs before the camera starts rolling, when all of your ideas start to come together in an organized way. Pre-Production can be a short or lengthy process, though the longer and more detailed your pre-production is, the more likely your video shoot will run smoothly. Effective pre-production can help shape your video, give your video focus, and save time and money in the production stage by planning for what could go wrong and what to shoot. Good pre-production can ensure that your video will showcase your vision and will serve its desired purpose.

a. Planning a Video

When you decide to create a video, there are lots of factors to consider. You must always keep in mind your timeline, budget, and resources, as well as the purpose of your video. Most important is to identify your primary audience and decide what you hope to accomplish with this video. Throughout the pre-production, production, and editing process, you must always double check and make sure that your video is satisfying its purpose and is directed at the audience you wish to reach. In the early part of this pre-production stage, you need to develop a concept that answers all of these important questions. Brainstorm ideas and choose the best ones that meet your message, audience, and other key factors. The more time you spend developing this concept, the smoother your production will go. Using a checklist can help to ensure that you have thought through the most important components. Please visit Appendix A of this guide for a pre-production checklist you can use to organize your video planning.

b. Scripting, Storyboards, and Shot Lists

Once you have developed a concept for your video and planned all key elements (audience, purpose, budget, timeline, resources, etc.), it is time to script your video. A video script organizes the visuals and audio of your video. Visuals may include video footage (from your library, new footage you plan to shoot, stock footage, etc.), images/photographs, graphics, animations, text, and other elements. Audio may include music, narration (from video footage or recorded voiceover), sound effects, and more. When creating a video script, include all of the auditory and visual elements, laying them out as you want them to appear in the video. Think of your script as an outline for creating your video. When you review your script, you should be able to picture each scene of your video, and hear in your mind the
audio that matches each scene. There are many different script formats and templates to use for creating a video script. A simple and popular format is a two-column script, in which the visuals are listed in the left-hand column, and the audio is listed in the right-hand column, directly across from its matching visuals. Appendix B contains a blank two-column script template that can be used to script your video. Appendix C contains a sample two-column script that can be used as a guide.

Another helpful planning tool is a storyboard. A storyboard visually tells the story of a video and sort of resembles a comic book. Its purpose is to map out the action you intend to shoot. Scenes of your video are sketched sequentially in boxes, and below each box you can write important audio, camera shots, or descriptions of what will happen in each scene. Storyboards vary greatly in style and detail. They can be made out of photographs, pencil/pen sketches, or newspaper/magazine cutouts for visuals, and can have very detailed audio, camera movement, and/or scene information, or have only brief notes. Storyboards are not a required part of the pre-production process, but can be very helpful in planning your video and sequencing the story it tells. Taking a short amount of time to create a rough storyboard can help make the video production process run easier, and ensure that your video flows nicely. For a simple storyboard template to use for mapping out your video, please go to Appendix D.

Finally, a shot list is another pre-production tool that can help a shoot go off without a hitch. A shot list is a list of key shots that you want to capture with a video camera/camera. A shot list can be long and comprehensive, with all shots needed listed out, or could be shorter and include just the “must have” shots. They can be very detailed or very simple. A simple shot list is appropriate for many video shoots. Each shot is numbered sequentially and important information is provided about each shot. For example, a simple shot list of only key shots might look like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shot Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Close-up (zoomed in shot) of school name on sign in front of building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Slow pan (slowly recording the scene by moving the camera from right to left or left to right) of school and school grounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Wide shot (zoomed out shot) of school building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Wide shot of teacher teaching a class of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Close-up of a child reading a book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Close-up of a hand turning the pages of a book</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shot lists help to ensure that no important shots are overlooked or missed on the day of the shoot. As shots are captured, they can be checked off or crossed off. They are an essential organizational tool for important video shoots. Another critical “must” is to get b-roll while you are out shooting in the field.

c. Coordinating a Video Shoot

Depending on your video concept, you may not have all of the video footage you need for your video. In this case, you may want to have a video shoot. You can capture footage of events, presentations; interview a person on camera, and more. You also have to capture videotape b-roll, which is extra footage you can use to cover a questionable video shot or to make your video more visually entertaining. For example, if your video features a teacher talking about the importance of reading, you could capture quick shots of children reading books, the teacher teaching his or her class, the outside of the school building, or other relevant footage to show in your video, with the narration from the interview underneath.
If a video shoot is needed, you can either do this yourself (in house), or hire a video professional/video production company to conduct your shoot. Local video production companies can be found easily by doing a search on the Internet. Most video production companies have websites that feature samples of their work, and will respond promptly to phone calls or email requests. There are also several databases of video production professionals and companies online that can help you locate a local video professional or production company. One such database is www.productionhub.com.

Good video companies should respond to your questions/requests in a timely manner, be able to answer your questions about the plans for your video/video shoot, and provide you samples of their work.

Other factors must also be considered when coordinating a video shoot. You must schedule all participants of the shoot and make sure everyone will arrive on time. You must select and sometimes reserve a location for the shoot. You must make sure that you have all necessary equipment and know exactly what you will be shooting (this is where the rest of your pre-production comes in handy). When all of this is in place, you are ready to produce your video.

**Video is a powerful tool, used to inform, inspire, and engage audiences. Video can inform people about a cause, provide updated information to individuals all across the country, and move people to action.**
The production stage is when you actually shoot your video. If you are creating a video from existing footage (video, pictures, etc., that you already have access to), you can skip this section of the Technical Assistance Guide and move on to the third section, “Editing.”

a. Location

Choosing a location for your video shoot is an important step. Do you want to shoot your video inside or outside? Will you shoot at your location (e.g., your office) or travel elsewhere? Some important factors to consider are that you will want a location that suits the needs of your video. For example, if you are shooting an interview of a person, you will want a location with a visually appealing background behind the person being interviewed that has some connection to what is being said. For example, if you are doing a story on early learning, you would want to shoot video at a child care facility. However, remember that the other two important factors to consider when choosing a location are noise level and the traffic level in that location. If you are recording something that requires audio (e.g., an interview, a speech, a dramatic performance, etc.), you will want a quiet location so that background noise does not compete with the audio you are trying to capture. You also want to choose a location that limits how often your video shoot will be interrupted by external forces (e.g., people walking through your shot, phones ringing, loud wind, etc.).

b. Camera

In order to conduct a video shoot, you need a camera. If you are hiring a production company with a crew, they will have a camera. There are many different video cameras on the market, from high-end, professional video cameras that cost thousands of dollars, to low-end models for the average consumer that cost $100 or less. You can search for information about various cameras by doing a simple search online. There are many websites that allow you to read reviews about different video cameras and see how they compare. One such website is:

www.camcorderinfo.com/ratings.php

If you are looking to shoot videos in-house, an inexpensive camera could be purchased. Flip cameras are great tools for foundations and nonprofit organizations because they are typically less than $100, are very simple to use and produce high-quality video. These cameras are especially useful for people who want to share videos online (for example, on Youtube) because you can connect the Flip video camera directly to your computer using its attached USB interface and quickly import the video to your computer. Flip cameras currently lead the pack in producing high-quality videos easily and inexpensively.

Flip Cameras: www.bestbuy.com/site/oltemplateplatemapper.jsp?id=pcat17080&type=page&q p=cabcat0403000~~nf398%7C%7C466c69 7020566964656f&list=y&nrp=15&sc=abC ameraCamcorderSP&sp=bestsellingsort+sk uid=&usc=abcat0400000&ref=30&loc=KW- 1474&s_kwcid=TC1I8113%20video%20 cameralSbI8994439959

c. Lighting

Another important aspect of video production is lighting. Good lighting can really make a video stand out. Likewise, poor lighting can make a video appear dull, hard
to see, or unpolished. You can use lighting to create a mood (e.g., use lighting to cast shadows for a dramatic effect), or to create a certain look (e.g., use lighting to brighten a location for an interview). You want to be sure that you have enough lighting for the scene to be clear and not cast in shadows. Different video shoots have different lighting demands. Many online resources exist that explain different lighting techniques. One useful website is below:

http://videoproductiontips.com/lighting-basics-for-video-making/

d. Audio

Audio is an element of video production that can make or break a video. If your shoot requires audio (e.g., you are taping an interview or a speech), you must always be aware of how your audio sounds. You want your audio to be loud enough to understand clearly but not too loud, otherwise it can be pitchy or distorted. When recording with a camera, the closer you are to the sound you are recording, the louder it will be. In some cases, the built-in microphone in the video camera will do a good job recording the audio. Sometimes, however, in video shoots you need distance between your subject and the camera.

In these cases, mics (microphones) can be used. Most video cameras have “mic input” ports, where an external microphone can be connected to the camera for better sound. Microphones are useful because they can be pointed directly at the audio source (e.g., at the mouth of the speaker) and because they can increase or decrease the volume of the sound with externally controlled sound equipment. Another helpful piece of advice is that if your video camera has an input port for headphones (as the majority of video cameras do), you should wear headphones when recording. This way, you can hear exactly what the camera hears, and adjust the audio accordingly. Remember that poor audio can only be fixed to a certain degree in editing; therefore it is best to record as great audio as you can during the actual shoot.

Below are a few online resources that provide more information about recording audio during a video shoot:

www.videoccasions-nw.com/votipaud.html
http://desktopvideo.about.com/od/videoprojects/tp/audiorecord.htm

e. Recording Narration

Depending on your video, you may want to record narration for your video. For example, you could edit together a sequence of pictures or video footage, and then later record narration to put under this set of images/footage. This process of recording off-camera narration is called recording voiceover.

To record voiceover, all you need is a computer and an audio or video editing program. A microphone is also highly recommended. The built-in microphone in many computers can usually be used to produce decent voiceovers, however by using an external microphone, you can generally direct the sound you are recording to produce a cleaner, more professional sound.

Audio is an element of video production that can make or break a video.

Popular editing programs are discussed in the next section of this guide. They can be used to record voiceovers for your video. Below is a list of helpful tips and instructions on recording voiceovers with a few popular video editing software programs that will be discussed in the next section of this guide.

Recording voiceovers in iMovie: www.dummies.com/how-to/content/how-to-record-a-voiceover-in-imovie.html

Recording voiceovers in Windows Movie Maker: http://presentationsoft.about.com/od/moviemaker/ss/wmmnarration.htm

Numerous other tips and instructions can be found online.
a. Popular Software Programs

Many editing programs exist on the market today. Some are professional grade, while others are geared to the general consumer. The prices of these programs range from free, to several thousands of dollars.

If you hire a video production company to edit your video, they likely will be using a professional editing program, such as Final Cut Pro (http://www.apple.com/finalcutpro/), Avid (http://www.avid.com/US/), or another type of professional editing software. These programs generally have many different editing features and options, allowing editors to fully customize their videos. Editors using these programs generally have some sort of training (or were self-taught) on the software, so they can utilize the software to its full potential. These programs are available to consumers, but are costly.

Many editing applications also exist for the average consumer. These programs are often free or inexpensive, and allow you to edit professional-looking videos as simply as possible. These kinds of software are ideal for foundations, nonprofits, and community organizations because they are cost-efficient, are directed at individuals without video editing experience, and have a user-friendly interface. For individuals with Mac computers or laptops (iMac, MacBook, etc.), iMovie is a great software program to use. Most Macs already come with this program installed.

![iMovie](www.apple.com/ilife/imovie/)

iMovie has a user-friendly interface which allows for easily editing videos. Apple, the makers of iMovie, also provides support in the form of tips and tutorials: www.apple.com/support/imovie/.

For individuals with PCs, Windows Movie Maker is an easy-to-use video editing software. Many PCs come with Windows Movie Maker installed on them; however, you can also download this program for free online.

![Windows Movie Maker](www.windows-movie-maker.org/?gclid=CNDhpvyJxq4CFUHi4AodzEN3UA)

Tutorials also exist online to help individuals become familiar with this software: http://presentationsoft.about.com/od/moviemaker/a/mov_mak_beg.htm

Numerous other editing programs exist, as well as helpful tips, guides, and tutorials. A quick online search will connect you with this information.
b. Branding

Branding is an important element to consider when editing your video, especially if you want to share this video on your organization’s website or on a social networking site. You can add your logo, add text (e.g., the title of the video) written in your organization’s colors, add theme music from your organization, and more. If you are creating a video series, you can connect all of your videos together using branding elements so that viewers know these videos are related and were developed by your organization.

The Campaign has provided video elements, which can be used by Campaign members and local grantees to brand their videos for the national Campaign for Grade-Level Reading. These elements consist of an opening animated graphic and voiceover (see file: GLRTemplateOpen) and a closing animated graphic and voiceover (see file: GLRTemplateClose). These elements allow Campaign members and grantees to create their own videos using their own footage, and then brand these videos with the Campaign’s official graphics. This can be done in-house or by a professional video production and/or editing company, simply by opening your edited video or footage in an editing program (such as Final Cut Pro, Windows Movie Maker, Apple iMovie, etc.) and then dragging and dropping the GLRTemplateOpen and the GLRTemplateClose to the beginning and end of the video file, respectively. To create a seamless transition between the opening, video, and the closing, transitional effects can be used.

c. Transitions—Bring Your Video to Life

Editing is a process that finalizes your video and allows you to make the video appear how you want it to appear. In editing, you can cut out unnecessary shots, clean up stumbles during an interview, set the tone with music, and more.

One key element in editing is adding transitions to your video. Transitions are the way in which two shots are joined together. Some cameras offer built in transitional effects, but most transitions are added during the editing process.

The most common type of transition is called a “cut,” in which one shot changes instantly to another. This type of transition moves the story along quickly, and is common in news segments, music videos, interview or “talking head” videos, and more. Another common type of transition is the “dissolve,” also known as a “cross-fade.” This is a polished-looking transition, in which one shot gradually fades into the next shot. This slows down the movement of the video and offers a smoother option of moving from one shot to the next.

Many other transition types and digital effects exist, and it is important to play around with the transitions available in your editing program (as well as those that can be downloaded online) to see what works best for your video. Be careful, however, of overusing transitions. Many interesting and unusual transitions exist and may look “cool,” however, they may not be appropriate for your video. Videos with many transitions (e.g., a shot spirals into the second shot, the third shot dissolves into the fourth shot, the fifth shot zooms in after the fourth shot) can be chaotic and look unprofessional. Most professional videos stick with clean, simple transitions, such as the dissolve and cut.

Remember, the purpose of transitions is to move your video along from one shot to the next. Transitions should not be obvious and distracting, and definitely should not take away from the content of the video itself.

Transitions are one way to liven up your video. You can also add music to your video which can set the mood of your video, emphasize different elements of your video, or simply make your video more engaging and entertaining. Music can be placed anywhere in a video. It is important to check the volume of the music, however,
especially if it is being used as background music under narration or interviews. You want your audience to be able to clearly hear what is being said. Your message can be lost if speaking parts are overpowered by the music.

Another way to liven up your video is to add b-roll to your video. B-roll is supplemental shots or alternative footage that coincides with what is being said that you use in your video. For example, if your video is highlighting a speech by the governor on improving reading scores in schools, you can break up the monotony of the visual of the governor speaking by editing in close-up shots of people in the audience watching his speech, images of children in school, and/or video footage of children reading with their families to create more interesting visuals. Stock photos can also be used to diversify the visuals in your video. Stock photos are photographs that have been taken and are offered by the photographer for sale or use by others. Below are links to a selection of websites that offer stock photos. A few of these sites also offer stock video footage, illustrations, music, and other elements as well.

- Getty Images (paid service; one of the most popular professional stock sites): [www.gettyimages.com/](http://www.gettyimages.com/)
- iStock Photo (paid service, offers a free weekly photo; popular professional site): [www.istockphoto.com](http://www.istockphoto.com)

These are just a few simple ways to liven up your video. Feel free to play around with your creative ideas, footage, and editing capabilities to see what works best for your video.
a. Popular File Formats

After editing your video, it is time to share it! Depending on how you want to share your video, you will have to export and save it in different file formats. If you want to burn your video to a DVD, you will want to save your video in a larger, clearer file format, such as Quicktime (which ends in .mov). If you want to share your video online, you will need to save and export your video in a sharing format, which is smaller and more suitable for the web. Popular file types for sharing videos online are Flash Video Format (ends in .fvl) and MPEG-4 Part 14 (ends in .mp4). Information about how to export and save your video in different file formats, as well as how to burn your video to a DVD, can be found by doing an Internet search on what your goal is and the editing program you are using (For example, in www.google.com, search “how to export video for the web in iMovie,” or search “how to burn video to DVD in Windows Movie Maker.”

For a brief guide on different file formats, check out: www.reelseo.com/basics-web-video-file-formats-video-containers/

b. Online Video Sharing

Sharing videos online is a great way to reach a larger audience, or to share your video with people outside of your local area. Video files generally are too large to share via email. If you want to send the video file to an individual, you can use a file delivery service such as YouSendIt.com (www.yousendit.com), which offers free and paid services. You could also post your video online (via your website or a social networking site) and send the link to the video in a regular email.

To reach a broader audience, you can share your video via social networking sites. Many of these sites offer privacy options in which you can make your video available to the whole online community, make it private so only you or people you send the video link to can see it, make it password protected, as well as other options. A few popular video sharing sites are listed below. Youtube is free, Vimeo offers both free and paid options (paid options generally have additional features and/or storage space) and Brightcove is a paid service.

- Youtube (free, most well-known): www.youtube.com
- Vimeo (free and paid options): www.vimeo.com
- Brightcove (paid option, offers a free trial): www.brightcove.com

Many of these websites also allow you to organize your videos into channels, customize the look of your video player (e.g., allow you to use your organizations colors, add your organization’s logo, etc.), allow you to add text descriptions of your videos, and more.

Finally, after going through all this work to get the right video and sound, use the best b-roll and/or still images, select the right transitions and music — make sure your video is protected by having release forms from everyone (including children) you interview. Appendix E.

Now, enjoy seeing how the power of video will help tell your community’s story of grade-level reading!

For more information or to discuss consultation, video production, or editing services for your video, please contact Billo Communications.
APPENDIX A: Pre-Production Checklist

You can use this checklist as a guide to planning your video.

• **What is the purpose of your video?** (To inform audiences about important issues? To provide an update to a specific audience about what is going on locally in the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading? To persuade parents to take children to the library and spend time reading with them? To invoke some sort of action from your audience? Etc.)

• **Who is your target audience?** (funders, grantees, partners, parents, students, educators, policymakers, the general public, etc.)

• **Will you be using your own media assets** (video footage, photographs, etc., that you have access to), **need to collect new media assets** (have a video shoot, take photographs, purchase stock footage/images, or hire someone to conduct a video shoot/photography session), or a **combination of both?**

• **If a video shoot or photography shoot is required, will you be doing this yourself** (in-house), or **hiring an individual or company** (out-of-house)?
• If a video shoot or photography shoot is needed, where will this take place? (location)

• What is your budget?

• Who is responsible for producing this video/who makes up the video team and what are their specific roles?

• What is your timeline?

• What other resources do you have access to (personnel, music, microphones/recording abilities, cameras, etc.) and what might you need?

Other notes:
# APPENDIX B: Script Template

**Title:** (Client or Organization Name, Name of Video, etc.)

**Script #1 Time Length:**

**Video Title:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VIDEO</th>
<th>AUDIO</th>
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</table>
The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading
Sample Script #7, 60 seconds
Key Areas and Goal

**VIDEO**

0:08 seconds
Opening Template Graphic

0:37 seconds
Images/footage children reading/in school

Text/graphic: **The Readiness Gap**
Image of low-income children with family

Text/graphic: **The Attendance Gap**
Image of children at home instead of school

Text/graphic: **The Summer Slide**
Image of children in the summer doing outdoor activities

Image of students graduating high school

**AUDIO**

**VO:** The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, Third Grade Reading Success Matters

**VO:** The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading has targeted three widespread challenges to students’ reading success that must be addressed:

- **The Readiness Gap:** Too many children from low-income families begin school already far behind their peers.

- **The Attendance Gap:** Too many children from low-income families miss too many days of school.

- **The Summer Slide or Summer Learning Loss:** Too many children lose ground over the summer months.

These issues must be addressed in order to improve academic success and life outcomes for our children.

**VO:** You CAN make a difference! For more information, please contact the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading at [www.gradelevelreading.net](http://www.gradelevelreading.net).
I hereby give my irrevocable consent to ____________________________________________, a partner of The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading Network, to photograph, film, videotape and then use, reproduce, and publish said images and/or interview.

These images/interview may be used by ____________________________________________, and/or The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, in any manner and for any purpose, including their use in print, film, videotape, and on the Internet.

I agree that photographs/negatives, film, videotapes, or audiotapes thereof shall constitute the sole property of the representatives of The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, and/or its assigns, with full right of disposition in any manner whatsoever.

I hereby release The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, and/or its assigns and its legal representatives and assigns, from any and all claims whatsoever in connection with the use, reproduction, and or publication of the images thereof.

__________________________________________  ____________________________
SIGNATURE                           DATE

__________________________________________  ____________________________
PLEASE PRINT NAME                   TELEPHONE NUMBER

NAME OF MINOR
(Please sign name if a guardian for a minor being interviewed)

Thank you.

__________________________________________
NAME OF LOCAL ORGANIZATION
The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading Network Partner
GLR DIY (Do It Yourself) Online Video Instruction

**STEP 1:** Choosing a Camera: Choosing a camera is the first step on your way to making videos that you can share.
https://vimeo.com/videoschool/101

**STEP 2:** Shooting Basics: Shooting video well is a skill that takes time to develop but with a few simple tips you'll find yourself on the path to movie magic.
https://vimeo.com/videoschool/101

**STEP 3:** Editing Basics: Editing video clips together can be really fun, especially once you master a few basic features in your editing program. With a bit of patience and experimentation you'll be producing smoothly edited videos in no time.
https://vimeo.com/videoschool/101

**STEP 4:** Sound:
https://vimeo.com/videoschool/archive/sound

**STEP 5:** Exporting to share your video online:
https://vimeo.com/videoschool/lesson/30/
video-101-exporting-to-share-on-vimeo-with-windows-live-movie-maker